In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) In a local area network comprising a plurality of terminals configured for running client applications and connecting to the Internet and each of said plurality of terminals having the ability to divide a request for information from a content server into a plurality of packets and distribute the plurality of packets via the local area network, a method of sending data over a communications network, the method comprising the steps of

(a) generating a request for information from a content server coupled to a wide area network by an originating terminal, said originating terminal coupled by means of a local area network to each of said plurality of terminals;

(b) each active terminal periodically sending a first status message to the other of the plurality of terminals in the local area network and to a reconstitution server to indicate that it is active;

(bc) dividing the request for information from a content server into a plurality of packets by said originating terminal;

(cd) the originating terminal distributing the plurality of packets between a first plurality of active terminals in the local

area network , each of said first plurality of active terminals (110a, 110b, 110c, 110d) having an associated direct wide area connection to the Internet , said associated direct wide area network connection to the Internet of a first one of said first plurality of terminals in the local area network different from an associated, direct, wide area network connection to the Internet of the remainder of said first plurality of terminals the plurality of packets being distributed over the local area network;

(de) each of said first plurality of active terminals transmitting each of said first plurality of packets received during step (ed) **over its associated, direct, wide area connection to the Internet** to asaid reconstitution server coupled to the Internet **such that the originating terminal shares the bandwidth of the associated, different wide area connections of said first plurality of active terminals**; and

(ef) the reconstitution server receiving the plurality of packets **via a plurality of said associated, different and direct wide area connections, reconstituting the plurality of packets into said request for information from said content server,** and sending the reconstituted plurality of packets to the content

server .

2. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 1, comprising the further steps of:

(~~f~~g) the content server sending content data to the reconstitution server in response to the request received in step (e~~f~~), the data being sent as a plurality of content data packets;

(g~~h~~) the reconstitution server distributing the plurality of content data packets to the first plurality of active terminals over the respective wide area connections;

(~~h~~i) the first plurality of active terminals sending the plurality of content data packets to the originating terminal ; and

(~~i~~j) the originating terminal receiving the plurality of content data packets to re-create the content data.

3. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 2, wherein in step (cd) and/or step (gh), the plurality of packets are distributed to the first plurality of active terminals in a round-robin basis.

4. (Original) The method according to claim 3, wherein the round-robin distribution of the plurality of packets is weighted.

5. (Currently Amended) A method according to claim 4, whereein the round-robin weighting is determined in accordance with the bandwidth of the respective wide area connection between the terminal and the Internet.

6. (Currently Amended) A communications network comprising;

a plurality of terminals for running client applications and connecting to the Internet, each of the plurality of terminals being connected to one another by a local area network, and at least some of said terminals having an associated, different and direct wide area connection to the Internet, said plurality of terminals each having the ability to divide a request into a plurality of packets and distribute the plurality of packets to other ones of said plurality of terminals via the local area network;

a reconstitution server, coupled to the Internet and a plurality of content servers,

wherein, in use, each active terminal periodically sends a first status message to the other of the plurality of terminals in the local area network and to said reconstitution server to indicate that it is active;

wherein an originating terminal in the local area network generates a request for one of the content servers , divides the request into a plurality of packets and distributes the plurality of packets between a plurality of active terminals via the local area network,

wherein each of said plurality of active terminals sends packets received to the reconstitution server via each said at least some terminal's separate associated and direct wide area connections **such that the originating terminal shares the bandwidth of the separate associated wide area connections of said at least some of said active terminals**, and wherein the reconstitution server sends the plurality of packets to the content server.

7. (Previously Presented) The communications network according to claim 6, wherein, in use,

the content server sends content data to the reconstitution server in the form of a plurality of content data packets,

the reconstitution server distributes the plurality of content data packets between the plurality of terminals over the respective associated, different and direct wide area connections,

the plurality of terminals route the plurality of content data packets to the originating terminal;

the originating terminal receives the plurality of content data packets and re-creates the content data.

8. (Previously Presented) The communications network according to claim 6, wherein one or more of said plurality of terminals has more than one respective wide area connection.

9. (Previously Presented) The communications network according to claim 6, wherein the local area network comprises one or more terminals , further to said plurality of terminals, not having a wide area connection.

10. (Previously Presented) The communications network according to claim 6, wherein each of the active terminals in the local area network comprises a list identifying the other active terminals.

11. (Cancelled)

12. (Previously Presented) The communications network according to claim 10, wherein an active terminal sends a second status message to the other terminals in the local area network prior to becoming inactive.